

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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TAGS: PFOR, AS, TH, XC, US

SUBJ: WHITLAM NEWSWEEK INTERVIEW

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" SINCE TAKING OFFICE IN DECEMBER, AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER GOUGH WHITLAM HAS SHAKEN HIS ALLIES AND AMAZED HIS NEIGHBORS BY CONDEMNING THE U. S. BOMBING OF HANOI, ANNOUNCING THE WITHDRAWAL OF AUSTRALIAN TROOPS FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA AND RECOGNIZING CHINA AND NORTH VIETNAM. RECENTLY, WHITLAM EXPLAINED HIS NEW FOREIGN POLICIES TO NEWSWEEK'S JUDY BIRD WILLIAMS.

WILLIAMS: DO YOU EXPECT TO GET ANYTHING BESIDES FRIENDSHIP OUT OF YOUR NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA?

WHITLAM: NOT JUST FRIENDSHIP. ONE WOULD HOPE WE WILL HAVE GOOD RELTIONS WITH EVERY COUNTRY, PARTICULARLY COUNTRIES OF SUCH GREAT SIGNIFICANCE AS CHINA. BUT THE REAL GAIN, OF COURSE, IS THAT BY GETTING RID OF THE HANGUPS OF THE DULLES ERA ONE CAN NOW COMMUNICATE WITH CHINA. THE THE LAST 23 YEARS WE DENIED OURSELVES THAT OPPORTUNITY. WE TOOK AN UNREALISTIC AND OBJECT-IONABLE ATTITUDE. IT IS QUITE ABSURD FOR ANY COUNTRY, PARTICULARLY IN THE PACIFIC REGION, TO DENY ITSELF THE OPPORTUNITY OF OFFICIALLY COMMUNICATION WITH A QUARTER OF THE HUMAN RACE.

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Q: WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE AMERICAN PRESENCE IN ASIA?

A: MY REMAINING FEAR IS THAT THE AMERICAN FORCES IN THAILAND MAY PRODUCE A SITUATION LIKE VIETNAM. AMERICAN USE OF AIR BASES IN THAILAND FOR OPERATIONS AGAINST VIETNAM HAS INEVITABLY AROUSED THE SUSPICIONS, AND IN FACT THE HOSTILITY, OF HANOI AGAINST THAILAND. THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF AMERICAN FORCES IN THAILAND WOULD PROLONG THAT SUSPICION AND HOSTILITY. THE MOST CONFIDENT AND SECURE COUNTRY BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND JAPAN IS INDONESIA; ONE REASON IS THAT SHE HAS NO FOREIGN TROOPS WITHIN HER BORDERS.

Q: WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN INDOCHINA NOW?

A: I AM NOT GOING TO MAKE A PREDICTION ABOUT THAT AT THIS TIME. I WILL PREDICT THAT AUSTRALIA WOULD NEVER AGAIN BE INVEIGLED INTO INTRUDING THERE. ONCE BITTEN, FOREVER SHY.

Q: CAN YOU SAY WHAT ROLE AUSTRALIA MIGHT WANT TO PLAY IN THE REHABILITATION OF INDOCHINA?

A: OUR INTENTION IS TO MAKE ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE INTERNATIONALLY OR REGIONALLY. IN THAT WAY, WE WILL AVOID THE GAPS AND OVERLAPPING IN NECESSARY AID WHICH WOULD COME FROM BILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS.

Q: WHAT ABOUT YOUR POLICY OF PROVIDING MILITARY AID TO SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS?

A: IT'S NOT SO MUCH THAT WE WANT TO REVIVE MILITARY AID IN THE SENSE THAT IT HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY THE UNITED STATES TO NEARLY ALL COUNTRIES IN LATIN AMERICA FROM TIME TO TIME; WHAT MY GOVERNMENT HAS IN MIND IS THAT WE ARE WILLING TO HELP OUR NEIGHBORS DEVELOP THE NECESSARY SKILLS A MODERN STATE REQUIRES - AND AMONG THOSE SKILLS ARE THE MILITARY SKILLS. WE ARE WILLING TO RESPOND TO REQUESTS.

Q: DO YOU THINK THE RESULT OF THAT MAY BE THAT YOU WILL STABILIZE CERTAIN SITUATIONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THUS HELP KEEP MILITARY GOVERNMENTS IN POWER?

A: ANY EFFICIENT REGIME - AND MILITARY EFFICIENCY IS ONE UNCLASSIFIED

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COMPONENT OF EFFICIENCY - TENDS TO PERPETUATE ITSELF. IN

GENERAL TERMS, HOWEVER, I DOUBT IF THE MOST EFFICIENT REGIMES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA ARE THE MOST OPPRESSIVE REGIMES.

Q: WHAT ABOUT THE (ELECTRONIC ESPIONAGE) STATION AUSTRALIA HAS MAINTAINED IN SINGAPORE? DO YOU WANT IT TO CONTINUE?

A: THE FACILITY TO WHICH YOU REFER IS OF GREAT VALUE TO AUSTRALIA. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE THAT IT SHOULD OPERATE FROM SINGAPORE TERRITORY UNLESS IT WAS A JOINT OPERATION WITH THE SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT - AND IT HAS NOT BEEN. OUR PREDECESSORS IN OFFICE HAD CONTEMPLATED BRINGING IT BACK TO AUSTRALIA. WE NOW HAVE TO PROCEED PROMPTLY IN DOING WHAT THEY WERE DITHERING ABOUT.

Q: YOUR RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES SEEM TO BE COOLING.

A: NOW THAT THE CEASE- FIRE HAS BEEN ACHIEVED IN VIETNAM, THE CAUSE OF FRICTION SHOULD EVAPORATE. OUR PREDECESSORS WERE PREPARED TO TOLERATE AMERICA' S ACTIONS IN VIETNAM. WE WERE NOT.

Q: ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT, IT IS WIDELY SAID THAT THE AMERICAN PENETRATION INTO YOUR INVESTMENT AND INDUSTRIAL MARKETS IS LARGE. ARE YOU PLANNING ANY MEASURES TO CURB IT?

A: WE ARE NO MORE PLANNING TO RESTRICT WHAT AMERICA DOES IN TAKING OVER AUSTRALIAN COMPANIES OR RESOURCES THAN WE ARE TO RESTRICT WHAT COMPANIES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES ARE DOING. IT' S AUSTRALIA' S OWN FAULT THAT SHE ALLOWS ASSETS TO PASS TO FOREIGN HANDS. WE CAN' T BLAME AMERICA.

Q: DO YOU FEAR JAPANESE ECONOMIC PENETRATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, INCLUDING AUSTRALIA, AND DO YOU THINK THAT THIS COULD GO BEYOND ITS ECONOMIC ROLE INTO THE POLITICAL ROLE?

A: THERE' S NATURAL WARINESS ABOUT JAPAN IN EVERY COUNTRY OF THE REGION BECAUSE JAPAN' S ECONOMIC STRENGTH IS SO IMMENSELY SUPERIOR. BUT I DON' T FEAR IT. I BELIEVE THE DAYS WHEN GREAT ECONOMIC POWERS FELT THEY HAD TO HAVE MILITARY OR POLITICAL DOMINATION HAVE NOW PASSED. WEST GERMANY AND JAPAN ARE THE GREATEST INSTANCES OF COUNTRIES WHICH CAN BE ECONOMICALLY PREDOMINANT WITHOUT EXERCISING POLITICAL DOMINANCE. THEY DIDN' T BELIEVE THAT 50 YEARS AGO BUT THEY NOW KNOW IT. CONTRIES THAT HAVE TRIED TO PRESERVE POLITICAL DOMINANCE AS A MEANS OF PRESERVING
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ECONOMIC PREDOMINANCE HAVE BEGGARED THEMSELVES IN THE PROCESS. BRITAIN HAS BEGGARED ITSELF; AMERICA HAS WEAKENED HERSELF.

Q: WILL AUSTRALIA EVER CONSIDER HERSELF AN ASIAN COUNTRY?

A: GEOGRAPHICALLY IT IS; CULTURALLY AND POLITICALLY IT IS NOT. THE OTHER COUNTRIES OF THIS REGION DON ' T REGARD AUSTRALIAN AS STRANGERS TO THE SAME DEGREE AS AUSTRALIANS REGARD THEMSELVES AS STRANGERS IN THE REGION. IT' S AMAZING HOWEVER, IN THE PAST TEN YEARS HOW AUSTRALIANS HAVE COME TO LOOK AT JAPAN IN A NEW LIGHT. IT IS QUITE OBVIOUS THAT ALL ASIANS DO NOT REGARD THEMSELVES AS KIN; THERE IS NO KINSHIP, FOR EXAMPLE, BETWEEN INDIA AND JAPAN JUST BECAUSE THEY ARE BOTH IN ASIA. THERE ARE BIGGER DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MOST COUNTRIES IN ASIA THAN BETWEEN COUNTRIES IN EUROPE.
RICE

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